To: Jeffrey J. Patrick
Subject: RE: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 4:38:11 PM
Attachments: image001.png
image002.png
image003.png
image004.png
SBSO ALPR MOU Signed.pdf

Responses:

1. Policy 428.2.1(G) requires that the ALPR policy and related procedures be conspicuously posted on the department's website. That requirement aligns with California law, which obligates public agencies that operate automated license plate reader systems to adopt and implement a usage and privacy policy and make it publicly available, including posting it on the agency's website. Agencies must also provide an opportunity for public comment before implementing the ALPR program.

   Your request seeks installation of physical signage around the city to notify the public of ALPR deployment. As of now, the department is not aware of any legal requirement in California that obligates a public agency to erect such signage for ALPR technology. The existing statutory framework focuses on written policy transparency and public process rather than on posting notice signs in the public right-of-way. Your recommendation has been received and noted.

2. The fully executed version of the SBSO contract appears to have not been maintained properly, as there is only a partially executed version saved. We will fix this. I attached a copy for signature at City Hall. Once completed, please route back to the PD for the Chief's signature.
3. The last internal audit was conducted on >>>
   a. We do not share data with Out of State Agencies.
   b. Agencies are required to follow all laws. They conduct their own audits. We do not audit other agencies.
   c. AUDIT SUMMARY

Daniel Cohen
Division Commander
Santa Maria Police Department
(805)-928-3781 ext. 1234

From: Jeffrey J. Patrick <jpatrick@cityofsantamaria.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:30 PM
To: Daniel Cohen <dcohen@cityofsantamaria.org>; Monica Davis <mldavis@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: FW: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

CMO received an email about one of our recent ALRP requests. Do we have a further response we can give?

Jeff Patrick
Assistant City Attorney
204 E. Cook St., Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 925-0951 ext. 2310
(805) 928-1275 fax
jpatrick@cityofsantamaria.org

This communication may be protected by the attorney-client privilege. Please do not forward without my approval or the privilege may be waived.

From: Thomas Watson <twatson@cityofsantamaria.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:10 PM
To: Jeffrey J. Patrick <jpatrick@cityofsantamaria.org>
Cc: David Rowlands <drowlands@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: FW: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

Please follow up on this request and advise Dave and I on your determination. Also, respond to the requestor. Thanks.

Tom

From: ianhowell94@gmail.com <ianhowell94@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:07 PM
To: Thomas Watson <twatson@cityofsantamaria.org>; David Rowlands <drowlands@cityofsantamaria.org>
Cc: Daniel Rios <drios@cityofsantamaria.org>; Web-City Clerk <clerkweb@cityofsantamaria.org>
Subject: Formal Inquiry: Transparency Discrepancies and Policy Execution for ALPR Technology

*** EXTERNAL EMAIL: Please use caution when opening links or attachments.***

Dear Mr. Watson and Mr. Rowlands,

I am writing as a resident of Santa Maria to follow up on a recent public records request regarding the Santa Maria Police Department's (SMPD) use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology. After reviewing the provided documents, I have identified three areas where I am seeking clarification to ensure our city's practices are consistent with state

law and established city precedents.

1. Consistency in Public Notice (Operation Blue Watch Precedent)
The City has set a clear standard for public transparency through Operation Blue Watch, which uses prominent signage to notify the public of 24-hour video surveillance. However, the Flock ALPR system lacks similar physical notice despite tracking more sensitive data. Given that Policy 428.2.1(g) requires the Support Division Commander to ensure policies are "conspicuously posted," I am requesting that the City align Flock's public notice with the existing Blue Watch standard by posting physical signs at city boundaries.

2. Status of Unexecuted Inter-Agency Agreements
The records provided to me include an "Information Sharing Agreement" with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office. While Sheriff Bill Brown signed this document in March 2023, the signature lines for the Santa Maria Chief of Police, City Attorney, and Risk Manager are blank.

- Does a fully executed (signed) version of this agreement exist?
- If not, under what finalized legal framework is the SMPD currently sharing data with the County Sheriff?

3. Verification of Mandated Audits (Policy 428.5)
Under Policy 428.5 and California Civil Code § 1798.90.52, the Support Division Commander is responsible for maintaining an audit trail and ensuring regular internal audits are conducted.

- When was the last internal audit conducted to ensure that data shared with the CHP-or any other agency-has not been accessed by unauthorized out-of-state or federal entities?
- May I have a copy of the most recent summary of that audit as managed by Commander Rios?

I am seeking to ensure that as we adopt "subtle" surveillance tools, we maintain the "honesty and truth" that our community expects. I appreciate your time and your commitment to protecting both our safety and our privacy rights.

Sincerely,
Ian Howell